

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR THE HUMANITIES**

SAMPLE APPLICATION NARRATIVE



Summer Institutes for College and University Teachers
Institution: Georgia College and State University



NATIONAL
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DIVISION OF EDUCATION
PROGRAMS

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National Endowment for the Humanities Division of Education Programs

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

This sample of the narrative portion from a grant is provided as an example of a funded proposal. It will give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. It is not intended to serve as a model. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with staff members in the NEH Division of Education Programs well before a grant deadline. This sample proposal does not include a budget, letters of commitment, résumés, or evaluations.

Project Title: *Reconsidering Flannery O'Connor*

Institution: Georgia College and State University

Project Director: Bruce Gentry

Grant Program: Summer Institutes for College and University Teachers

NEH Summer Institute for College and University Teachers

(CFDA 45.163)

Reconsidering O'Connor

July 2007

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NEH Summer Institute

Reconsidering O'Connor

Co-Directors: Marshall Bruce Gentry and John D. Cox

Introduction:

The *Flannery O'Connor Review* and Georgia College & State University submit this proposal to the Division of Education Programs of the National Endowment for the Humanities for support of a one-month Institute in which 25 college teachers will examine selected works by Flannery O'Connor from a variety of critical perspectives. Participants and Faculty will also have the opportunity to examine O'Connor's manuscripts—and other primary sources housed in Special Collections of the GC&SU Library—to enrich the discussion of the published works. Participants will tour Andalusia (the O'Connor farm, just outside Milledgeville), as well as other local O'Connor-related sites in Milledgeville. The primary goals of the Institute are as follows: enhance O'Connor studies and stimulate participants toward their career goals; help participants start or improve the teaching of O'Connor; increase the production of conference papers and presentations; and inspire participants to produce articles and books about O'Connor.

“Reconsidering O'Connor” will take place throughout July 2007 and will be sponsored by the *Flannery O'Connor Review* and GC&SU with the cooperation of the staff of Special Collections in the GC&SU Library. The participants—diverse in age, goals, and experience, and drawn from colleges and universities throughout the US—will be chosen from a group of applicants generated by electronic postings and by mailings. We want participants who have experience teaching and studying O'Connor, as well as participants who have never taught or studied O'Connor. Scholars study her works in relation to a variety of fields, so we would expect to receive applications from people who might specialize in Literary Studies, American Studies, Anthropology, Cultural Studies, History, Southern Studies, Interdisciplinary Arts, Religious Studies, Women's Studies, or Creative Writing. We are confident we will select a group of participants who represent varying approaches.

A major feature of this Institute will be direct consultation on a one-on-one basis between Institute Faculty and the 25 participants. Each of the six Faculty (as well as Co-Director Gentry) will be available for individual conferences with participants concerning their ideas about teaching O'Connor and their research work. At the end of the Institute, as participants report to each other on their results, Co-Director Gentry and Sarah Gordon of the Faculty will provide feedback.

The sponsors of this Institute request support from NEH in the amount of _____ to support the Institute and its follow-up activities.

Intellectual Rationale:

Flannery O'Connor has achieved canonicity for many reasons: her sophisticated explorations of religion; her intelligent engagement with significant theologians and philosophers; her investigations of violence and evil; her unique responses to the traditions of American literature and to the cultural forces of her time, esp. those having to do with race issues and social activism; her ability to identify with outsiders, including children and the disabled and even those who perpetrate violence; her fascinating conflictedness over gender; and her skill as a satirist and stylist. "Reconsidering O'Connor" will assist participants in examining O'Connor from all of these important angles.

Flannery O'Connor is a writer taught all over the world, a great and funny writer—of novels, stories, essays, and letters—who appears in virtually every US anthology for college classes in freshman literature, American literature, or the short story. She is the subject of scholarly articles, numerous dissertations, and critical books—publications that arrive at widely varying conclusions about the value and meanings of her works.

Justly famous as a twentieth-century writer for whom religion is a living truth, O'Connor developed techniques for embodying mysteries within an exaggerated realism that continue to fascinate scholars and students. O'Connor was very good at spelling out the Catholic readings that she intended for readers to discover (if her readers were clever enough), and while there have been many books written about O'Connor and religion, the subject of the interconnections between literature and religion is

sufficiently complex to generate continued debate. Recent books by Richard Giannone and Farrell O’Gorman have argued, respectively, for O’Connor’s similarity to the hermit tradition of early Christianity, and for O’Connor’s position as an innovator within the context of twentieth-century American Catholic writing. The Church’s ongoing struggle with issues of poverty, race and ethnicity, social activism, sex, illness, violence and the various forms of evil found in contemporary culture—not to mention debates about theological points—continue to make people eager to reconsider O’Connor. (Presentations/seminars by Giannone, Kreyling, and O’Gorman will most directly address religious approaches to O’Connor.) The Catholicism of O’Connor promises to make her increasingly important in the 21st century. As critics like Michael Kreyling and Patricia Yaeger expand the concept of southern literature to include literature written beyond the national border of the US, O’Connor may become even more important. (For example, she is an author whose Catholicism strikes a chord with many writers south of the US border.)

A current popular topic in O’Connor studies is race, which O’Connor thought she downplayed. Timothy P. Caron has recently argued the thesis that O’Connor’s religious stance makes her fiction racist. Alice Walker and Toni Morrison have praised and puzzled over O’Connor’s complex treatment of black and white, her refusal to take socially progressive political positions, her stubborn silences. O’Connor tried to fit in with a racist local community, and she wrote that there are no easy solutions to the tragedies of racism. Students and scholars continue to be interested in the extent to which O’Connor’s works are enlightened on race, or not; the extent to which she was, as an individual, racist, as shown perhaps in her unpublished letters; and how we can praise and blame her simultaneously. O’Connor’s unfinished third novel was started as a satire on racial liberals, and her abandonment of the work suggests that her criticism of liberalism was not truly heartfelt. (Virginia Wray’s presentation and seminars and one of Kreyling’s seminars address these issues directly.)

O’Connor also attracts scholarly attention because she gives scholars the opportunity to study someone who could in many ways see herself as a member of an elite—but also as the Other. Part of O’Connor’s appeal, in other words, lies in the fact that she simultaneously could feel superior to her

outsider characters and could identify in various ways with her freaks and misfits. The sources of this sense of otherness are various. She was an intellectual and artist from a family who lived on a beautiful square in Savannah and in a Milledgeville home that once temporarily served as the mansion for an antebellum governor of Georgia; on the other hand, she and her family lived through many years when there was not enough money. She was a Catholic, strong in her convictions, but in a region where Protestants could be very prejudiced against Catholics. She was a southerner, with all the shame that accompanies southern pride. Even before she had serious health problems from lupus in the last third of her life (when she did most of her writing), O'Connor refused to be her family's southern belle; in other words, she lived well outside the supposedly privileged space her culture defined for beautiful young women. (All the Institute Faculty will address this set of issues, from a variety of angles.)

O'Connor never called herself a feminist, but recent developments in O'Connor studies indicate that literary critics who raise issues of gender are finding a gold mine in O'Connor's works. For example, recent books by Katherine Hemple Prown and Sarah Gordon examine O'Connor's early manuscripts to demonstrate that O'Connor started out with a consciousness of gender that she later intended to suppress. Prown shows that the Iowa Writer's Workshop caused O'Connor to revise *Wise Blood* to take out its female voice. Gordon analyzes O'Connor's simultaneous acceptance and rejection of patriarchy in an early story, "The Crop," and discusses O'Connor's investigation of the possibility of giving *Wise Blood* a female prophet character. Another topic of scholarly interest is O'Connor's feelings about men. Sally Fitzgerald, in her Chronology for the Library of America edition of O'Connor, nominated several men as love interests for O'Connor. A recent article by Mark Bosco, S.J., on Erik Langkjaer, a Danish textbook salesman who served as the basis for the wooden-leg-stealing Bible salesman in O'Connor's "Good Country People," shows we are just beginning to understand O'Connor's feelings. Paul Elie's biography of several mid-twentieth-century Catholic writers suggests the depth of O'Connor's feelings for the poet Robert Lowell. Another topic for biographical scholars is O'Connor's relationship with her father, about whom O'Connor rarely spoke in detail but to whom she was very close. O'Connor has an interesting attitude to manhood and masculinity: she could criticize men who fall short of the role that patriarchy

requires, yet she could be critical of the patriarchy itself. (Yaeger will address these issues of gender most directly, and they will also be addressed by Wray and Gordon.)

O'Connor is often studied for the high level of craft in her novels and stories. Her stories—as well as her essays about writing—are used in creative writing seminars throughout the US. The skill with which she constructed and revised her work and her ability to control conflicting impulses within a story provide models for contemporary writers. (Gordon and Wray will address issues of O'Connor's skill with narration and satire.)

The O'Connor Collection at GC&SU:

Special Collections in the Georgia College & State University Library in Milledgeville is a rich resource for the in-depth study of O'Connor at an NEH Institute, no matter what approach a given participant may prefer. At the O'Connor Collection website, <http://library.gcsu.edu/~sc/foccoll.html>, potential participants will find a thorough introduction to the Collection.

The O'Connor Collection includes all of O'Connor's existing fiction manuscripts (over 6,000 pages in all). Participants are likely to find most interesting the portions of the Collection that relate to O'Connor's most-taught novel, *Wise Blood*. There are also numerous drafts relating to "The Life You Save May Be Your Own," "The Partridge Festival," "The Enduring Chill," "Parker's Back," and "Judgment Day," significant variants of a number of other stories, and O'Connor's work on other novels. Some participants will be interested in seeing hard-to-find published versions of "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" or "The Displaced Person" or the little-known early story "The Coat." It should be noted that O'Connor's method of composition was, while spending years on a novel, to take an occasional break from working on a novel to spin off what would become a famous story; consequently, many participants will find insights into stories by thinking about the manuscripts of novels. The best source for previewing the manuscripts at GC&SU is *The Manuscripts of Flannery O'Connor at Georgia College* by Driggers, Dunn, and Gordon (U of Georgia P), and the best source for previewing all the published versions of O'Connor's works is David Farmer's *Flannery O'Connor: A Descriptive Bibliography* (Garland).

The significant collections of O'Connor's letters at GC&SU (which can be previewed through the O'Connor Collection website) should be interesting to teachers and scholars who are interested in the intellectual communities of which O'Connor was a part. Participants might be interested in groups of letters between O'Connor and the publishing house of Farrar Straus Giroux, letters between O'Connor and her classmate Betty Boyd Love, or (perhaps especially) the correspondence between O'Connor and the writer Maryat Lee (a good friend who was the sister of a President of Georgia State College for Women)—a set of letters that raises questions about race. And even letters that a participant has already read in the collection *The Habit of Being* can take on new meaning when the originals are examined without the deletions decided upon by O'Connor's editor and/or her mother. The vertical file in the O'Connor Collection (also described on the O'Connor Collection website) contains a wealth of documents that participants might browse for inspiration: her college transcripts, her will, information on the real events that served as the basis for a work, etc. Audiotapes are available of O'Connor lecturing and of O'Connor reading the story she used most for her public readings, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find."

Some participants will be most interested in surveying O'Connor's library, much of which is in the O'Connor Collection. O'Connor is generally believed to have used a consistent method of annotating books, and it is fairly easy to get a sense of how she responded to the passages she marked. Participants interested in previewing the 700 books and journals from O'Connor's personal library may consult *Flannery O'Connor's Library: Resources of Being* by Arthur F. Kinney (U of Georgia P). Participants may also want to examine drafts of O'Connor essays (published in the famous collection *Mystery and Manners*) and her book reviews (published in the collection *The Presence of Grace and Other Book Reviews*, compiled by Leo J. Zuber and edited by Carter W. Martin, U of Georgia P).

The O'Connor Collection at GC&SU includes a copy of nearly every article, dissertation, or book about O'Connor. Participants who examine Robert E. Golden's 1977 O'Connor bibliography (in *Flannery O'Connor and Caroline Gordon: A Reference Guide*, by Golden and Mary C. Sullivan) and R. Neil Scott's recent, supplementary work of 1,000+ pages, *Flannery O'Connor: An Annotated Reference Guide to Criticism* (Timberlane) may be confident they will find any listed source at GC&SU.

As a supplement to the research materials found in the O'Connor Collection, a set of texts important to the work of the Institute will be held at the Reserve Desk of the GC&SU Library. This set of texts includes works by and about O'Connor, as well as works requested by Institute Faculty as reading assignments for the seminar meetings. A complete bibliography of these reserve materials may be found in Appendix C. Also listed in Appendix C are the eight texts (by O'Connor and by scholars participating in the Institute) that will be provided to participants in "Reconsidering O'Connor."

Content and Implementation:

The basic plan is to have one week (Monday through Saturday, July 2-7) of orientation and consultation, followed by three weeks (Mondays through Saturdays, July 9-28) during which participants attend lectures and seminar meetings and during which each participant has one week in the O'Connor Collection. The last two days (Monday and Tuesday, July 30-31) will consist of reports by the participants on what they have accomplished during the Institute. We will divide participants into three groups of roughly equal size (A, B, C) so that they may have the opportunity to spend extended periods of time in the Special Collections reading room examining O'Connor's manuscripts, the books in O'Connor's personal library, and other materials. Each group may spend up to a week (30 hours) in the reading room. Participants with the most clearly defined projects in mind will be placed in the first group to be scheduled in the reading room; participants who need more time to consider their options will be allowed to wait awhile before beginning their time in the reading room.

The bulk of the Institute will involve lectures and group discussions about the issues that arise from O'Connor's works; individual consultations between participants and Faculty; and field trips, film screenings with discussions, and readings by creative writers. Lectures and some other events will be held in the evening so that all participants may be involved. Seminar meetings will be repeated so that seminar size remains small and so that participants have an opportunity to be involved with most of the faculty members at some point. Certain works for which there are large manuscript collections (esp. *Wise Blood*) will receive more attention from seminar leaders than works for which there are few drafts.

Participants will visit the O'Connor display in the new Library Museum (a display that focuses on O'Connor's cartoons and on her writing for various student publications when she was a student here) and other nearby sites, such as the newly-restored Old Governor's Mansion (from the days when Milledgeville was the antebellum capital and the Governor lived in a house next door to the O'Connor home in town); Memory Hill Cemetery (where O'Connor and her parents are buried); and the rest of the historic district in downtown Milledgeville. Prof. Robert Wilson, the GC&SU expert on local history, has agreed to lead walking tours of the downtown historic district. Field trips will include visits to Andalusia (the O'Connor farm that provides a setting for many of O'Connor's works, located just outside Milledgeville), to the museum and grounds of Central State Hospital (once the world's second-largest asylum, and a setting for one of O'Connor's stories); to Eatonton for insights into J. C. Harris and Alice Walker, two authors with interesting connections to O'Connor; and to Macon and Atlanta, home to a wealth of cultural attractions relating to the Georgia that O'Connor wrote about. Participants may attend summer music events on the GC&SU campus, and the *Flannery O'Connor Review* will sponsor evening readings by faculty from the MFA Program in Creative Writing at GC&SU.

During the last two days of the Institute, as participants report on what they have accomplished, Sarah Gordon and Marshall Bruce Gentry will give final supportive feedback to participants about where they might go next with their teaching of O'Connor and their scholarly work about O'Connor. We want participants to complete the Institute with clear plans for further development.

Daily Schedule:

Appendix A contains three one-page charts with increasingly detailed levels of description: (1) a list of the activities for all 31 days of the Institute; (2) a weekly schedule of the participants in each of the three seminar groups; and (3) the content of the weekday activities involving seminar meetings.

Appendix B provides a comprehensive version of daily schedules, including descriptions of lecture topics and reading lists for each seminar group meeting. During MWF times labeled "Conferences," participants will be expected to schedule a half-hour meeting with each of the two Faculty members for

the week. MTWTF times labeled “Library Research” are times when participants have the option of working in the O’Connor Collection. **Note:** All schedules have been carefully designed to allow participants sufficient time for individual study.

Project Faculty and Staff:

Appendix D includes resumes of the Co-Directors, Faculty, and Other Organizers, listed in the order in which they present at the Institute. Appendix E includes letters of commitment from Faculty, Other Organizers, and GC&SU Administrators.

Marshall Bruce Gentry (Co-Director) is Editor of the *Flannery O'Connor Review* and Professor of English at Georgia College & State University. The author of *Flannery O'Connor's Religion of the Grotesque* (UP of Mississippi), Gentry has published articles on O'Connor in *The Southern Quarterly*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, and *The Flannery O'Connor Bulletin*. His writing about O'Connor also appears in the collections *Flannery O'Connor's Radical Reality* (U of South Carolina P), *"On the Subject of the Feminist Business": Re-Reading Flannery O'Connor* (Peter Lang), and *Flannery O'Connor: New Perspectives* (U of Georgia P). His articles on Doctorow, Roth, and Carver appear in *Contemporary Literature*, *South Atlantic Review*, *The South Carolina Review*, *Shofar*, and *The CEA Critic*. He is coordinating GC&SU conferences about O’Connor in 2006 (“O’Connor and Other Georgia Writers”) and 2008 (“The Stories of Flannery and Faulkner”).

John D. Cox (Co-Director) is Associate Editor of the *Flannery O'Connor Review* and Acting Chair/Assistant Professor of English at Georgia College & State University. Cox is the author of *Traveling South: Travel Narratives and the Construction of American Identity* (U of Georgia P), and he has published in *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia* and has an entry on William Bartram forthcoming in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. He has presented papers on American and southern literature at numerous conferences, including Modern Language Association and an Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Symposium. Cox co-founded the conference "Southern Writers, Southern Writing," which celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2005, assisted in the 2003 O'Connor

conference at GC&SU, and is helping organize the 2006 and 2008 O'Connor conferences. A graduate of the University of Mississippi, Cox worked for two years as Assistant Curator at Rowan Oak, the home of William Faulkner in Oxford, Mississippi, and currently serves as Assistant Director of the Center for Georgia Studies.

Patricia Yaeger (Faculty) is Professor of English and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan. She is the author of *Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women's Writing, 1930-1990* (U of Chicago P), which won the Perkins Award from the Society for the Study of Narrative Literature and the Holman Award from the Society for the Study of Southern Literature. She has also published *Honey-Mad Women: Emancipatory Strategies in Women's Writing* (Columbia UP) and has edited *The Geography of Identity* (U of Michigan P) and *Nationalisms and Sexualities* (Routledge). Yaeger's essays on O'Connor have appeared in *Mississippi Quarterly*, *Flannery O'Connor: New Perspectives* (U of Georgia P), *New Essays on Wise Blood* (Cambridge UP), and *Modern American Women Writers* (Scribners). She serves on the Editorial Advisory Board of the *Flannery O'Connor Review* as well as the Editorial Boards of many other journals.

Virginia Wray (Faculty) is Professor of English at Lyon College in Batesville, Arkansas. She was the first editor of *Cheers!*, the newsletter of the Flannery O'Connor Society, and she has just completed three years as President of the Society. She has published a number of articles on O'Connor, including "Flannery O'Connor's Struggle with Patriarchal Culture" for Teresa Caruso's collection *"On the Subject of the Feminist Business": Re-Reading Flannery O'Connor* (Peter Lang) and, most relevant to her contribution to the Institute, a study of Flannery O'Connor's unfinished third novel based on the manuscripts in the O'Connor Collection at GC&SU: "Flannery O'Connor's *Why Do the Heathen Rage?* and the Quotidian 'Larger Things'" in *The Flannery O'Connor Bulletin*. She serves on the Editorial Advisory Board for the *Flannery O'Connor Review*.

Michael Kreyling (Faculty) is Professor of English at Vanderbilt University. He is the author of such books as *Inventing Southern Literature* (UP of Mississippi), which was awarded the Eudora Welty Prize; *Understanding Eudora Welty* (U of South Carolina P); *Eudora Welty's Achievement of Order*

(Louisiana State UP); *Figures of the Hero in Southern Narrative* (Louisiana State UP); and *The Novels of Ross Macdonald* (U of South Carolina P). The publications most directly relevant to his participation in the Institute are *New Essays on Wise Blood*, which he edited for Cambridge UP, and his recent article in *Flannery O'Connor's Radical Reality* (U of South Carolina P). His articles on a wide range of southern authors appear in such journals as *Mississippi Quarterly*, *The Southern Review*, *Southern Quarterly*, *American Literature*, and *American Literary History*. He serves on the Editorial Advisory Board for the *Flannery O'Connor Review*.

Richard Giannone (Faculty) is Professor of English at Fordham University. He is the author of two books on Flannery O'Connor: *Flannery O'Connor and the Mystery of Love* (U of Illinois P; rev. ed. Fordham UP) and *Flannery O'Connor, Hermit Novelist* (U of Illinois P), which was selected as an Outstanding Academic Title by *Choice*. He is also the author of books on Kurt Vonnegut and Willa Cather and the editor of two anthologies, one of fiction, the other of the works of Keats. His scholarly articles about O'Connor have appeared in such journals as *Renascence*, *Christianity and Literature*, *The Flannery O'Connor Bulletin*, *Religion and Literature*, *Thought*, and *Studies in Short Fiction*, as well as in the collection *Flannery O'Connor: New Perspectives* (U of Georgia P).

Farrell O'Gorman (Faculty) is Assistant Professor of English at Mississippi State University. He authored the recent book *Peculiar Crossroads: Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy, and Catholic Vision in Postwar Southern Fiction* (Louisiana State UP). He is also the author of recent articles on O'Connor for the special section of the 2006 volume of the *Flannery O'Connor Review* that concerns O'Connor and Latino/a fiction (an article about O'Connor in relation to Richard Rodriguez plus an interview with Rodriguez about his thoughts on O'Connor), for *Etudes Faulkneriennes*, and for *Renascence*. O'Gorman has also published articles on Tobias Wolff, Cormac McCarthy, Walker Percy, and Tim O'Brien.

Sarah Gordon (Faculty) is Professor Emerita of English at Georgia College & State University, where she helped found the Women's Studies Program. Gordon was Editor of *The Flannery O'Connor Bulletin* and the *Flannery O'Connor Review* from 1985 to 2003 and was Associate Editor of the *Bulletin* for the preceding twelve years. She is the author of *Flannery O'Connor: The Obedient Imagination* (U of

Georgia P). She is the sole editor of *Flannery O'Connor: In Celebration of Genius* (Hill Street), and she contributed to the editing of *The Manuscripts of Flannery O'Connor at Georgia College* (U of Georgia P) and of *Postmarked Milledgeville* (GC&SU). Her book of poetry is *Distances* (Brito & Lair). She has coordinated several conferences on O'Connor at Georgia College & State University and is a frequent lecturer on O'Connor. In addition to essays and reviews in *The Flannery O'Connor Bulletin*, she contributed to *Flannery O'Connor: New Perspectives* (U of Georgia P) and to *Flannery O'Connor's Radical Reality* (U of South Carolina P). She serves on the Board of the Flannery O'Connor—Andalusia Foundation, Inc., and is working on a guidebook to O'Connor sites (U of Georgia P). She serves on the Editorial Advisory Board of the *Flannery O'Connor Review*.

Nancy Davis Bray (Supervisor of Work in O'Connor Collection) is Associate Director for Special Collections and Assistant Professor of Archives Administration at Georgia College & State University. She earned her M.P.A. from the University of Georgia. She is deeply involved in the Society for Georgia Archivists (which she has served as President) and has prepared numerous exhibits and given many talks relating to Flannery O'Connor's years at GSCW (now GC&SU) and to the O'Connor Collection. She serves on the Editorial Advisory Board of the *Flannery O'Connor Review*.

Craig Amason (Executive Director, Flannery O'Connor—Andalusia Foundation, Inc.) earned a BA in English and an MA in History from what is now GC&SU before earning his MLn in Librarianship from Emory. He has worked as Director of Milledgeville's public library and as a history instructor at GC&SU. He has published a history of Andalusia in the *Flannery O'Connor Review* and is currently working with Sarah Gordon on *A Guidebook to Flannery O'Connor's Georgia*.

Robert Wilson (Guide for Tours of Milledgeville), Professor of History at GC&SU, was named a GC&SU Distinguished Professor in 1999-2000. He is the author of *A Centennial History of Georgia College*. He teaches seminars on local history and frequently gives talks and tours about Milledgeville. He is a member of the Georgia Historical Association and the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation.

Martin Lammon (Coordinator for Readings by MFA Creative Writing Faculty) directs the MFA Program in Creative Writing at GC&SU and edits the journal *Arts & Letters*. He is the author of *News*

from Where I Live (Arkansas) and editor of *Written in Water, Written in Stone: Twenty Years of Poets on Poetry* (Arkansas). He was President of the Associated Writing Programs (AWP), 2000-2002.

Selection of Participants

The participants—diverse in age and experience, and drawn from colleges and universities throughout the US—will be chosen from a group of applicants generated by electronic postings and by mailings. We will select a mix of scholars who have studied and taught O'Connor's works for some time, established scholars who are studying O'Connor at a professional level for the first time, and teachers who want to improve their abilities to help students study O'Connor. We want participants who understand and are inclined toward a traditionally Catholic reading of O'Connor, as well as participants who are inclined to avoid religious explanations. We will select participants who may approach O'Connor from a variety of critical perspectives and who represent a variety of academic specializations. We want people who can speak and write well and who will be good colleagues for the Institute. We expect strong differences of opinion to be evident throughout the Institute, so we will be eager to select participants who will make the conflicts collegial and productive. We will recruit participants through the O'Connor listserv, through Andalusia's communications with its visitors, through relevant newsletters (such as *Cheers!*—the newsletter of the O'Connor Society—and the newsletter for the Society for the Study of Southern Literature). We will advertise through the Center for Study of Southern Culture at Ole Miss, the Center for the Study of the American South at UNC-Chapel Hill, and the Institute for Southern Studies at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. We anticipate that centers for the interdisciplinary study of American Catholicism will be willing to help us advertise: Notre Dame has the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism, Vanderbilt has the Center for the Study of Religion and Culture, and there is also a center for the study of religion at Fordham University.

In accordance with standard NEH practice, as part of the application process, potential participants will be asked to complete an essay wherein they will discuss why they want to participate in the Institute, what their goals are, what sorts of teaching experiences they have had, esp. with teaching

O'Connor, and how they think the Institute will improve their teaching and scholarship. Such collection of information will guarantee a good mix of participants. The committee for selecting participants consists of . (For resumes, see Appendix D; for letters of commitment from and , see Appendix E.) The selection committee will examine the applicants' essays, resumes, and letters of recommendation to determine which applicants are most likely to contribute something unique to the Institute and to benefit themselves and their students as a result of the Institute.

Institutional Context

As Flannery O'Connor's alma mater, Georgia College & State University is the home of O'Connor studies. Nancy Davis Bray, along with the rest of the staff of Special Collections, is fully committed to being as helpful as possible to the Institute throughout July 2007. (For Bray's resume, see Appendix D; for her letter of commitment, see Appendix E.)

Georgia College & State University has undergone a significant transformation in its facilities since 1996, when it was designated the liberal arts university in the University System of Georgia. It will provide an excellent setting for the Institute. Participants will meet in the newly renovated and expanded GC&SU Library and the Arts & Sciences Building. GC&SU is committed to ensuring that NEH participants enjoy their experience on our campus. Restoration of an historic front campus residence hall should be completed by the time of the Institute and will provide comfortable accommodations for participants. However, should there be construction delays, lodging will be provided in a new residence hall located within a block of the campus. Suites consist of two bedrooms and one bathroom, private suite temperature controls, phone, cable, and internet jacks, and in-house laundry facilities. Our Office of Technology Solutions will connect participants' computers into our wireless system. Food service will be available through campus facilities. Also, since GC&SU is located at the edge of downtown Milledgeville, participants may sometimes wish to eat at one of the many restaurants just a block from campus. Participants will receive copy cards, some office supplies, and instructional materials. On-

campus recreational facilities are also available in the Wellness Depot, a train station originally built in 1853 (and rebuilt in 1865 after Union General Sherman burned it). In 2003, the Wellness Depot opened as a renovated exercise facility outfitted with a variety of cardio and weight equipment. (Today the cardio room walls and loading doors remain much as they were during the operation of the facility as a train depot; interestingly, in the 1920s the train that stopped at the depot was known as the "Beauty Special" and later the "Peach Special" in honor of the female passengers who were attending what was then Georgia State College for Women.) Since Milledgeville is in the middle of the state, participants can drive in 30 minutes to Macon, in 90 minutes to Athens, in two hours to Atlanta, and in three hours to Savannah. For letters of commitment from members of the GC&SU Administration, see Appendix E.

Results and Evaluation

The Co-Directors will follow suggestions from NEH for the collection of evaluation data throughout the Institute, will keep in touch with participants regarding their teaching, and will keep track of publications and presentations that result from the Institute.

The *Flannery O'Connor Review* will be eager to consider articles for publication and to inform participants about conferences and publishers interested in their work. The *Review* regularly publishes articles about teaching O'Connor, so participants in the Institute will be encouraged to submit pieces about new strategies for using O'Connor's works in the classroom. O'Connor conferences held at GC&SU will be a likely place for presentation of scholarly results. The O'Connor listserv and the O'Connor newsletter (*Cheers!*) are also likely venues for the continued networking of participants and faculty and for the dissemination of Institute results.

Since this will be the first of what we hope will be a series of Summer Institutes at GC&SU, we will conduct thorough evaluations during and after the conference to guide us as we design future proposals.

Reconsidering O'Connor Daily Schedule: Details

Note: Participants will have ample of time for individual study. During the MWF times labeled “Conferences” each week, participants should expect to schedule a half-hour meeting with each of the two faculty members for the week. MTWTF times labeled “Library Research” in Appendix B indicate times when participants have the option of working in the O'Connor Collection.

WEEK ONE

Sunday, July 1:

Arrival in Milledgeville

Monday, July 2:

Morning: Welcome and Introductions

Afternoon: Distribution of books and research materials, explanation of schedule

Evening: Welcome banquet

Tuesday, July 3:

Morning: Introduction to O'Connor Collection by Nancy Davis Bray

Afternoon: Walking tours with Robert Wilson (Prof. Wilson will conduct the tours twice so that only half the participants need to be in each tour group.) Tours will take participants to see the graves of the O'Connors at Memory Hill Cemetery, the O'Connor home, now known as the Cline-O'Connor-Florencourt House), Sacred Heart (O'Connor's church), and buildings that were part of Georgia State College for Women when O'Connor was a student.

Wednesday, July 4:

All day: Visit to Andalusia (the O'Connor farm, which provides the setting for much of O'Connor's fiction) for picnic and exploration of the farm. Talk by Craig Amason. Film of “The Displaced Person,” which was filmed at Andalusia. Shuttle transportation provided.

Thursday, July 5:

Morning and Afternoon: Individual meetings between the Co-Directors and the participants. By the end of the afternoon, participants will have final assignments to one of three groups. The members of a group will meet together for seminars and work in the O'Connor Collection at the same time.

Evening: Film of *Wise Blood*, with discussion led by Marshall Bruce Gentry

Friday, July 6:

Morning and Afternoon: Trolley tour of Milledgeville to see the lovely old homes, tours of Old Governor's Mansion (next door to the O'Connor's home in town) and the Old Capital Museum (where the antebellum government was housed). These tours will give a sense of Milledgeville history that was very important to O'Connor's family.

Evening: Reading by Martin Lammon and Karen McElmurray, GC&SU Faculty in MFA-Creative Writing Program

Saturday, July 7:

Morning: Tour of Central State Hospital, esp. the Museum (optional). Central State provides a setting for O'Connor's story "The Partridge Festival" and, as the world's largest asylum at one time, is important to the reputation of Milledgeville throughout the South.

WEEK TWO (Faculty: Patricia Yaeger and Virginia Wray)

TOPIC for the week — O'Connor: The South, Race, Gender, and Satire

Monday, July 9:

Morning: Groups A & B: Conferences with Yaeger or Wray
Group C: Library Research

Afternoon: Groups A & B: Conferences
Group C: Library Research

Evening: Lecture by Prof. Patricia Yaeger: "Flannery O'Connor and John Wayne." This lecture addresses gender issues in 1950s America and how O'Connor reacted to her culture's definitions of feminine and masculine roles.

Tuesday, July 10:

Morning: Group A: Seminar with Patricia Yaeger on O'Connor's late story "Parker's Back" as a work that can be profitably interpreted using a postcolonial approach. The story asks us to redefine our sense of what constitutes the South. Readings: O'Connor, "Parker's Back." Patricia Yaeger, "Southern Orientalism: Flannery O'Connor's Cosmopolis." *Poco Theory, the U.S. South, and New World Studies*. Ed. Jon Smith. UP of Mississippi, forthcoming.

Group B: Seminar with Virginia Wray on O'Connor's early writings, her skills as a satirist and her interest in race issues before she became a religious writer. Readings: O'Connor, "The Coat." *Doubletake* 2.3 (1996): 38-41. O'Connor, *The Home of the Brave*. New York: Albondocani Press, 1981. Sally Fitzgerald. "Root and Branch: O'Connor of Georgia." *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 64.4 (1980): 377-87. Virginia Wray, "Flannery O'Connor's Long Apprenticeship: Honing the Habits of Irony and Satire." *Antigonish Review* N.S. 99 (1994): 139-49.

Group C: Library Research

Afternoon: Group A: Seminar with Patricia Yaeger on *Wise Blood* and the gender issues raised by the novel. Readings: O'Connor, *Wise Blood*. Patricia Yaeger, "The Woman without Any Bones: Anti-Angel Aggression in *Wise Blood*." *New Essays on Wise Blood*. Ed. Michael Kreyling. Cambridge UP, 1995. 91-116.

Group B: Seminar with Virginia Wray on O'Connor's reworking of and retreat from her plans for a third novel, showing that O'Connor returned to what she knew she could do well. Readings: O'Connor, "Judgment Day," with some attention to other late stories. Robert Giroux, Introduction to *The Collected Stories*. Clara Claiborne Park, "Crippled Laughter: Toward Understanding Flannery O'Connor." *American Scholar* 51.2 (1982): 249-57.

Group C: Library Research

Evening: Film version of "The River," with discussion led by John D. Cox

Wednesday, July 11:

Morning: Groups A & B: Conferences
Group C: Library Research

Afternoon: Groups A & B: Conferences
Group C: Library Research

Evening: Lecture by Prof. Virginia Wray: “The Importance of What Flannery Didn’t Say.” This lecture discusses how the manuscripts of O’Connor’s unfinished third novel (*Why Do the Heathen Rage?*) reflect O’Connor’s changing attitude on race and social issues.

Thursday, July 12:

Morning: Group A: Seminar with Virginia Wray:
 Same topic as for morning of July 10
 Group B: Seminar with Patricia Yaeger:
 Same topic as for morning of July 10
 Group C: Library Research

Afternoon: Group A: Seminar with Virginia Wray:
 Same topic as for afternoon of July 10
 Group B: Seminar with Patricia Yaeger:
 Same topic as for afternoon of July 10
 Group C: Library Research

Evening: Reading by Renee Dodd and Allen Gee, GC&SU Faculty in Creative Writing Program

Friday, July 13:

All day: Groups A & B: Conferences
 Group C: Library Research

Saturday, July 14:

Field trip to Macon, GA (optional): Tubman Museum (for insights into the African-American culture that O’Connor wrote about) and antebellum mansions—which, unlike Milledgeville’s, are open for regular tours. (Some participants might also want to visit the Ocmulgee National Monument for insights into Native American culture in Georgia.)

**WEEK THREE (Faculty: Michael Kreyling and Richard Giannone)
TOPIC for the week — Theology in Relation to O’Connor’s Outsiders**

Monday, July 16:

Morning: Groups A & C: Conferences with Kreyling or Giannone
 Group B: Library Research
Afternoon: Groups A & C: Conferences
 Group B: Library Research

Evening: Lecture by Prof. Michael Kreyling: Flannery O’Connor and the Art of Believing: Caroline Gordon, Jacques Maritain, and Teilhard de Chardin.” This talk about O’Connor’s engagement with important thinkers explores the intersections of O’Connor’s southern cultural beliefs and her Catholic beliefs.

Tuesday, July 17:

Morning: Group A: Seminar with Michael Kreyling on southern mores for racial separation vs. race-free theology in selected stories.

Readings: O’Connor, “The Artificial Nigger,” “Revelation,” “Everything That Rises Must Converge.” Robert Penn Warren, *Who Speaks for the Negro?* (excerpts). Michael Kreyling, “A Good Monk Is Hard to Find: Thomas Merton, Flannery O’Connor, the American Catholic Writer, and the Cold War.” *Flannery O’Connor’s Radical Reality*. Ed. Jan Nordby Gretlund and Karl-Heinz Westarp. South Carolina, 2006. 1-17.

 Group B: Library Research

Group C: Seminar with Richard Giannone on issues that arise from O'Connor's fictional treatment of outsiders: cultural deceit and desire, demonic energy, scapegoating, the victimized body. Readings: O'Connor, "The Life You Save May Be Your Own," "The Partridge Festival," "The Displaced Person," "The Lame Shall Enter First," "The Artificial Nigger," "Judgment Day," "Parker's Back," and *Wise Blood*.

Afternoon: Group A: Seminar with Michael Kreyling on the body, sexuality, and faith in selected works. Readings: O'Connor, *Wise Blood*, "The Comforts of Home," "Good Country People." Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (excerpts). Patricia Yaeger, "The Woman without Any Bones: Anti-Angel Aggression in *Wise Blood*." *New Essays on Wise Blood*. Ed. Michael Kreyling. Cambridge UP, 1995. 91-116.

Group B: Library Research

Group C: Continuation of morning seminar with R. Giannone

Evening: Film version of "The Comforts of Home," with discussion led by Marshall Bruce Gentry

Wednesday, July 18:

Morning: Groups A & C: Conferences

Group B: Library Research

Afternoon: Groups A & C: Conferences

Group B: Library Research

Evening: Lecture by Prof. Richard Giannone: "Belief in Times of Unbelief." This talk examines how O'Connor found and maintained certainty in spite of the fundamental uncertainty that characterizes our period, in religion and other realms of life. The subject is more of a quandary when one considers that O'Connor writes about outsiders of an improbable sort.

Thursday, July 19:

Morning: Group A: Seminar with Richard Giannone:

Same topic as for morning of July 17

Group B: Library Research

Group C: Seminar with Michael Kreyling:

Same topic as for morning of July 17

Afternoon: Group A: Seminar with Richard Giannone:

Same topic as for afternoon of July 17

Group B: Library Research

Group C: Seminar with Michael Kreyling:

Same topic as for afternoon of July 17

Evening: Reading by Alice Friman and Laura Newbern, GC&SU faculty in MFA-Creative Writing Program

Friday, July 20:

All day: Groups A & C: Conferences

Group B: Library Research

Saturday, July 21:

Field trip to Atlanta, GA (optional): Carter Library and King Center for insights into the history, culture, politics, and race relations about which O'Connor wrote. (Some participants might also want to visit such tourist attractions as the High Museum or the Georgia Aquarium.)

Week Four (Faculty: Farrell O’Gorman and Sarah Gordon)
TOPIC for the week — O’Connor: Bioethics, Theology, and the Narrative Voice

Monday, July 23:

Morning: Group A: Library Research
Groups B & C: Conferences with O’Gorman or Gordon

Afternoon: Group A: Library Research
Groups B & C: Conferences

Evening: Lecture by Prof. Farrell O’Gorman: “O’Connor, Catholicism, and the American Gothic Tradition: ‘Monkish Fables’ of the New World.” This lecture addresses the complex relationship between Catholicism and American individualism in O’Connor’s published novels in light of early depictions of that relationship in the American Gothic tradition.

Tuesday, July 24:

Morning: Group A: Library Research
Group B: Seminar with Farrell O’Gorman on O’Connor and bioethics—how O’Connor’s Catholicism relates to her experiences with illness and medicine, and what O’Connor would have known about eugenics programs and prevailing views about heredity and poverty. Readings: O’Connor, “The Life You Save May Be Your Own,” “Introduction to *A Memoir of Mary Ann*,” *Everything That Rises Must Converge*. Erskine Caldwell, *Tobacco Road* (excerpt). Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Birth-Mark.” Susanna Gilbert, “‘Blood Don’t Lie’: The Diseased Family in *Everything That Rises Must Converge*.” *Literature and Medicine* 18.1 (1999): 114-31. Keely, Karen A. “Poverty, Sterilization, and Eugenics in Erskine Caldwell’s *Tobacco Road*.” *Journal of American Studies* 36.1 (2002): 23-42. Edward J. Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science: Eugenics in the Deep South*. Johns Hopkins UP, 1996 (excerpts). William F. Monroe, “The ‘Mountain on the Landscape’ of Flannery O’Connor.” *Chronicle of Higher Education* 15 Dec. 2000: B14, B16.

Group C: Seminar with Sarah Gordon on the analysis of narrative voice in O’Connor. The seminar will also consider exaggeration as a fictional technique, using biography in determining artistic meaning, cartooning as visual hyperbole, and the relationship between the techniques of cartoon and fiction. Readings: O’Connor, *Wise Blood*, “The Life You Save May Be Your Own,” “Good Country People,” “Greenleaf.” Diane Arbus, *Diane Arbus Revelations*. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005. James Thurber, *Writings and Drawings*. Library of America, 1996. Jean Cash, *Flannery O’Connor: A Life*. Tennessee, 2003. Sarah Gordon, “The Case of the Fierce Narrator.” *Flannery O’Connor: The Obedient Imagination*. Georgia, 2000. 32-82. Josephine Hendin, *The World of Flannery O’Connor*, Indiana, 1970. Clara Claiborne Park, “Crippled Laughter: Toward Understanding Flannery O’Connor.” *American Scholar* 51.2 (1982): 249-57. Adam Phillips, “Thwarted Closeness: Adam Phillips on Diane Arbus.” *London Review of Books* 26 Jan. 2006: 30-31.

Afternoon: Group A: Library Research
Group B: Continuation of morning seminar with F. O’Gorman
Group C: Continuation of morning seminar with S. Gordon

Evening: Film of “The Life You Save May Be Your Own” and *Galleyproof*, with discussion led by John D. Cox

Wednesday, July 25:

Morning: Group A: Library Research
Groups B & C: Conferences

Afternoon: Group A: Library Research
Groups B & C: Conferences

Evening: Lecture by Prof. Sarah Gordon: “Long Shots and Close-Ups: Flannery O’Connor and Diane Arbus.” This lecture explores the use of narrative distance and comic exaggeration in O’Connor’s fiction as the means of creating a world from which she would have been—by race, sex, and

seminar—excluded. O’Connor’s famously fierce narrative voice is comparable to the unrelenting eye of the photographer Diane Arbus. The end that O’Connor set herself—that we are *all* “other”—separates O’Connor from Arbus.

Thursday, July 26:

Morning: Group A: Library Research
 Group B: Seminar with Sarah Gordon
 Same topic as for July 24
 Group C: Seminar with Farrell O’Gorman
 Same topic as for July 24
Afternoon: Group A: Library Research
 Group B: Continuation of morning seminar with S. Gordon
 Group C: Continuation of morning seminar with F. O’Gorman
Evening: Reading by David Muschell, GC&SU faculty member in MFA-Creative Writing Program

Friday, July 27:

All day: Group A: Library Research
 Groups B & C: Conferences

Saturday, July 28:

Field trip to Eatonton, home of authors Joel Chandler Harris (of Uncle Remus fame) and Alice Walker (most famous for *The Color Purple*), both of whom scholars have related to O’Connor. Tour will take participants to the Harris Museum and to various sites associated with Walker.

Week Five

Monday, July 30:

All day: Presentations by Institute Participants with feedback from Sarah Gordon and Marshall Bruce Gentry

Tuesday, July 31:

Morning: Presentations by Institute Participants with feedback from Sarah Gordon and Marshall Bruce Gentry

Afternoon: Departure